



Kings
"Goliath"

Written by

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Network Draft
August 24, 2007

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Los Angeles, CA 90064

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PROLOGUE.

FADE IN ON:

A MONARCH BUTTERFLY.

Its wings a regal orange, backlit by a sun of the same color. It flies a butterfly's bouncy path over a broad field... to LAND lightly on something METAL. TILT DOWN it to see it's...

A RIFLE.

Slung across the back of a RUDDY-FACED SOLDIER. Young enough he's still called "Kid" by men of substance, old enough that it's wrong when they do. This is DAVID SHEPHERD. We are...

EXT. THE FRONT. NORTHERN BORDER. THE JACKAL VALLEY. DAY.

A battlefield. In exactly the worst place imaginable to hold a war. Everything is weathered and aged in proportion to the time spent out here. Including the SOLDIERS.

IN A TRENCH

Tired FRONT LINE PRIVATES rest against a dirt wall. They take solace in splitting a BROWNIE wrapped in tin foil. David hands some to his buddy, NATHAN, pulls out a smoke.

NATHAN

Seriously, Shepherd, your mom makes the best fuckin' brownies, what's in these?

DAVID

Guilt. Gimme a light.

Before he can, ANOTHER SOLDIER comes over, pulls the cigarette from David's mouth.

ANOTHER SOLDIER

Easy, killer. I told Mom I'd take care of you. No smoking.

He takes the cigarette for himself. This is David's protective oldest BROTHER, ELI. A LANCE CORPORAL. Eli smokes while looking through his binoculars.

BINOCULAR POV: We see the front is a line drop dead between TWO HILLS facing each other. The VALLEY between them is a NEUTRAL ZONE, heavily wired and GUARDED on both sides.

FROM OUR SIDE, we can see the ENEMY'S HILL. And the ARMORED CAVALRY that owns it. An impenetrable line of MONSTROUS TANKS evenly spaced 100 yards apart for as far as the border lasts. Metal rottweilers, guarding their line. No wonder the name painted on the side of each one reads GOLIATH.

SUPER: GILBOA, THE NORTHERN BORDER

SUPER: THE WAR AGAINST GATH CONTINUES

ELI
Damn Goliaths. Every day another round,
just to remind us we're outgunned.

DAVID
We're talking about it. Must be working.

ELI
I got a pool going on when you think
they'll blow today.

Eli looks through his binoculars. David checks his watch.

DAVID
Should be any second actually.

ELI
(bullshit)
You don't know...

DAVID
Kinda do. Aaaany second.

ELI
It's a different time every day. It's
random --

At which -- BOOM! BOOM! BOOOOOOM! SHELLS SUDDENLY EXPLODE
as, one by one, each of the Goliaths lets off an explosive
200mm round. Not aimed at anything. A daily show of
strength. Saber rattling. EVERYONE DUCKS down.

Eli looks at smirking David -- *How the hell...?*

ELI (cont'd)
If you weren't my little brother I'd say
you were a spy. How'd you know that?

DAVID
Have another brownie.

He throws Eli the tin in consolation, secret safe. *Grrr.* At
that, MARCUS SAVOY jumps into the trench, wipes his nose on
his sleeve -- the manners of a goat, but a good friend.

SAVOY
You guys hear? A squad got pinched. At
Foxland Forest. Got out alone somehow,
no air support. Bastards ambushed them.

David sits up. They all do.

DAVID
They dead?

SAVOY
Not all. They took hostages.

Suddenly, that brownie doesn't taste so good. Off David...

EXT. "UNITY HALL". CITY OF SHILOH. THAT MOMENT.

A modern, corporate building, gleaming glass. Just across from City Hall. The centerpiece of a SPRAWLING CITY.

A FLAG flies in front of Unity Hall, embossed with an emblem: A BUTTERFLY. The emblem and its colors should recur tastefully in backgrounds throughout. Like a corporate logo but prouder.

SUPER: CITY OF SHILOH, CAPITAL

From inside we hear FOOTSTEPS POUNDING, as...

INT. LONG HALLWAY. UNITY HALL. THAT MOMENT.

A SUITED MESSENGER RUNS his ass off down the long art-lined hall. Inappropriate footwear ECHOES. He flies, carrying a sheet of paper, rounding a corner to...

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY. UNITY HALL. CONTINUING.

He pounds down that one to...

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY. UNITY HALL. CONTINUING.

Finally reaching the huge, heavily GUARDED doors of...

INT. BOARDROOM. UNITY HALL. CONTINUOUS.

An imposing room, owned by a massive semicircular table. ONE MAN sits at the only head, faced by a DOZEN SUITS. Like a Board meeting its CEO. We see him ONLY FROM THE BACK as --

The Messenger BURSTS in, completely out of breath. He reads:

MESSENGER

A platoon was ambushed, Foxland -- twelve dead -- two hostage -- over the border...

ICY SILENCE. All wait for the MAN AT CENTER to say something. COME AROUND TO REVEAL:

SILAS BENJAMIN.

Menace in his hands but kindness in his eyes. A lion in late-Autumn, but still very much in his prime. AN OVERSIZED CROWN OF GOLD AND OPAL is mounted on the wall well BEHIND his chair, so that, seen from dead on, he looks to be wearing it.

We begin to understand that this is hardly Washington... or even a shareholder meeting. *This is something else entirely.*

Finally... Silas speaks:

SILAS

They go too far. Gath.

(beat)

(MORE)

SILAS (cont'd)
 They'll find I'm willing to meet them and go further. We don't negotiate for hostages. Much as we want to, much as our soldiers deserve it... War asks the heart to freeze at room temperature. Send for the families.

The Ministers understand. The matter settled. A beat, then:

MESSENGER
 Sir. It was the 127th.

The blood drains from Silas's face. The stone resolve gone.

MESSENGER (cont'd)
 I'm sorry, Sir -- it's --

Silas rises -- and PUNCHES the Messenger violently in the face before he can even get out the words. He goes down.

SILAS
 Call the Ambassador to Gath. Get them back. Get it done!

His CHANCELLOR rises to do just that -- until, a COLD VOICE:

MINISTER
 You can't. We don't negotiate for hostages, as you said. We can't now.

Silas knows it's true. He sits. A rare look of defeat.

SILAS
 Then what do we do?

DAVID (PRELAP)
Nothing?

INT. BARRACKS. BASE CAMP. THAT MOMENT.

Camp nearest the front. A SERGEANT briefs the SOLDIERS on the awful news.

SERGEANT
 That's the order. No one goes after the hostages. We don't need any more losses, and the last 18 months, anyone who went within 200 yards of a Goliath was a loss.

He hears their emotional reactions. This is the worst thing that can happen to a soldier. He doesn't like it any better.

SERGEANT (cont'd)
 This comes from the top. Anyone who feels like arguing can do it from a military prison.

DAVID

(too loud)

But they're out there now! By morning, they'll be so deep down the rabbit hole their moms'll won't even know where to cry. Are we just gonna let 'em die? --

Eli pulls his dumb brother back from pressing the issue.

ELI

Leave it, David. It's not your call.

The Sergeant leaves. The men grumble.

NATHAN

If we had anything to cut through the Goliaths, we'd be in there already. Be suicide to try a rescue op.

SAVOY

Those two are letters home to mamma. "Sorry, ma'am. Ultimate sacrifice."

Resigned, the fighters go quiet. This could be them.

ELI

(to David)

You really wanna help them, get some sleep and fight smart tomorrow. C'mon...

Eli gives David a reassuring shove. Off David, unconvinced...

INT. BARRACKS. THAT NIGHT.

David is unsettled. Can't sleep. He tries the other side of the pillow. No rest there either. His eyes are wide open.

EXT. LOOKOUT POST TOWER. NIGHT.

Savoy is one of THREE MEN on watch. Binoculars and NIGHT VISION SCOPES keep a sharp eye on the enemy.

David, in full armor with a SQUARISH PACK in a sling over his shoulder, BAPS Savoy's scope, scaring the crap out of him.

DAVID

Anyone on the move?

SAVOY

Shit you walk quiet, Shep. The hell are you doing out here?

DAVID

Nothing. Who's moving on the hill?

SAVOY

Bitch on 5-KO rolled 50 yards off a ditch, prolly didn't like sleeping on a tilt. Dude, what are you doing?

David looks out into the night. He then pulls off his bulky body armor, leaves it in a pile.

DAVID
Can't run in these.

SAVOY
(getting it, checks his scope)
You think it's them? I thought I saw a shelter go up, could be hiding 'em behind the tanks, but... They'll court martial you for this. If you live that long.

DAVID
Don't worry. I was a mechanic back home.

SAVOY
I'm calling your brother --

DAVID
Don't. He'll just try and stop me. Just gimme your wrench.

SAVOY
What're you gonna do? Change their oil?

David grabs a wrench, and Savoy's NIGHT VISION GOGGLES too. He slings on his PACK, and slips out into the dark and into --

EXT. NEUTRAL ZONE. CONTINUOUS.

In just a thermal David cuts a lither figure, able to navigate the rocky terrain and barbed wire. He keeps low, timing his movements against the SEARCHLIGHTS. He looks:

NIGHT VISION POV: Fencing. Wide expanse. Then ahead --

THE LINE OF TANKS. Evenly spaced across the horizon. Except for TWO, closer together by half. The ones Savoy described. David heads for them. He crosses the BORDER GULLY, into --

EXT. GATH TERRITORY. CONTINUOUS.

David lays flat in a shallow trench. From here he can see the offset tanks, and behind them, by a EUCALYPTUS GROVE --

A SMALL MAKESHIFT CAMP

ENEMY SOLDIERS sleeping. The only ones awake are TWO GUARDS, covering a small tent. DAVID MOVES FOR IT -- forcing him to crawl RIGHT BY A TANK. Too close. He can hear the monster HUMMING as he crawls past. VIBRATING with killpower.

EXT. GATH CAMP. CONTINUOUS.

A TENT GUARD perks up at a SHUFFLING SOUND. He looks towards the grove. Raises his gun --

He sees A COYOTE SCATTER.

The gun lowers. It's distraction enough for the Guard not to notice the RUFFLE in the back flap of the tent he's minding.

INT. GATH TENT. CONTINUOUS.

David slips in -- finds TWO BLINDFOLDED SOLDIERS. Gilboan Army uniforms. One has a HEAD-WOUND, dried blood covers his face, barely conscious. The OTHER has a patched-up SHOULDER-WOUND, recently beaten. These two have been through a lot.

David pulls their blindfolds. Signals for quiet. Shoulder-wound, the more cogent one, nods. Trusting. David signals again -- *Two men, out front.* They move for the back.

EXT. GATH TERRITORY. CONTINUOUS.

David all but carries Head-wound. They make slow and clumsy progress up to the hill... to the GOLIATH LINE.

DAVID

Stay with me.

And then -- CHUK-CHUK. The heart-stopping sound of a GUN being COCKED makes them freeze. Not 30 feet away are TWO GATH SOLDIERS. Switching out guns, covering the line. They don't see them. Yet. David and the wounded lay as low as physics allows as the Gath Soldiers cross RIGHT BY THEM.

BOOTS walk past at eye level. The moment passes agonizingly.

Finally, the Soldiers move on. Safe to move again.

MOVE WITH DAVID as they BOLT down the hill -- closer and closer to the border and safety -- seemingly safe... until --

A BLINDING LIGHT SHINES RIGHT ON THEM --

They've been spotted! BY A TANK. Broken formation and rolling down the hill RIGHT AT THEM. BLAM! BLAM!

EXPLOSIVE SHELLS tear up the ground. Rock fragments CUT into them. They DUCK behind a rock. David's face bleeds.

DAVID (cont'd)

I'll cover. Can you get him to lookout?

SHOULDER-WOUND

I think so. Where's backup?

David shakes his head -- *No backup.* A look between them... AND DAVID ROLLS OUT, drawing fire. The hostages RUN for it.

EXT. LOOKOUT POST. THAT MOMENT.

Savoy hears the EXPLOSIONS on the hill.

SAVOY

Son of a bitch. Shepherd!

He grabs his SCOPE, sees the hostages hobbling across the gully, undetected thanks to David. Turns to a SOLDIER:

SAVOY (cont'd)
Get a vehicle down there. Now!

Hearing the action, OTHERS come to see what he's doing as --

EXT. NEUTRAL ZONE. THAT MOMENT.

BOOM! David rolls away from the tank fire into a TRENCH. He finally unslings that SQUARE PACK on his back -- pulls out a telescoping end. It's a HANDHELD MISSILE LAUNCHER (JAVELIN). David moves for open ground, to face the tank dead on.

The tank TURNS, comes at him. David waits for it -- takes aim. DAVID'S POV: As he lines his shot right at the gun turret -- taking aim RIGHT BETWEEN ITS EYES. The tank bears down at him. Now's his moment. DAVID FIRES.

THE MISSILE SOARS -- closer to the tank... closer... and --

IT MISSES!

Sails just OVER its turret. That's not what was supposed to happen. The tank comes at him mercilessly. *Fuckfuckfuck.*

No time to reload the Javelin, David pulls out that WRENCH -- it has a GRENADE taped to it. He THROWS it by the handle... It connects with the Goliath -- but BOUNCES OFF its hide, gets lost under the great tank's tread. This is bad.

The tank SPITS BULLETS. David runs wildly, his Javelin lost behind him. He TRIPS. Fallen David is caught dead to rights.

EXT. LOOKOUT POST. THAT MOMENT.

WHOLE SQUADS have come from the barracks to watch this. Savoy looks through his scope (KEEP THE ACTION FROM THE DISTANT LOOKOUT POV, *so we don't see exactly how this goes down as*):

They see David FALLEN RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE GOLIATH TANK. Then he RISES, seemingly to face it. A kid against a giant. The kid stands shock still. He doesn't stand a chance --

SAVOY
He's getting up! You seeing this?

LOOKOUT SOLDIER
He's a dead man.

The SOLDIER looks back, SNAPPING PICTURES of the David and Goliath showdown through his night scope. SCOPE POV AS:

AN EXPLOSION SUDDENLY GOES OFF UNDER THE TANK'S TREAD (David's lost wrench grenade). The tread unhinges. The tank LURCHES.

EXT. GATH TERRITORY. THAT MOMENT

ON DAVID

realizing what just happened. The grenade buys him the few seconds he needs. He DIVES for his Javelin, reloads, kneels down and --

FIRES!

The top of the TANK EXPLODES. The monster stops. Goliath slain. Sudden silence. The shock of the whole Valley.

As David drops the launcher and RUNS his lucky ass off...

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD. SUNRISE.

A jeep carries David (alive but shaken) back toward base camp. Shoulder-wound sits beside him, cared for by a MEDIC. Head-wound lies on a gurney in the back. Savoy drives.

EXT. BASE CAMP. SUNRISE.

The jeep drives through. All around, SOLDIERS are SILENT. Eli runs over, jumps on board. He could kill David. But instead just hugs him.

ELI

You dumb motherfucker -- if you died I would have fucking killed you.

The jeep pulls into the motor pool, alongside POLISHED GOVERNMENT VEHICLES, out of place among the Bradleys. *Shit.*

DAVID

Who's here?

ELI

Your court martial.

SERGEANT

Shepherd! You were given an order! --

But the SHOUTING sure to come is interrupted by the WHIRRING overhead. They all look up as --

A HELICOPTER LANDS.

The BUTTERFLY EMBLEM on its tail. Its door opens. EVERYONE IN CAMP SALUTES when they see

SILAS STEP OUT.

SERGEANT (cont'd)

The King approaches!

Yes, he just said "KING." Silas ignores all ceremony, rushing STRAIGHT TO DAVID'S JEEP... and goes right for HEAD-WOUND at back.

SILAS

How is he?

MEDIC

Cuts to the head and stitches to remember them by. But he'll be fine, Sir.

David has no idea what's going on as his King takes the wounded soldier in his arms, holds him tight. Not like a leader of men but a terrified FATHER.

The wound cleaned, they're now able to see the soldier's face. And recognize it. It hits his Eli first -- *holy shit*:

ELI

That's Jack Benjamin.

DAVID

Where?

ELI

The one you just saved.

(beat)

You just brought home the King's son.

All eyes turn to the Kid. Off David, very suddenly a hero...

SMASH TO BLACK.

END PROLOGUE.

ACT ONE.EXT. CITY OF SHILOH. CRISP MORNING.

A clean new city, unspoiled by time or litter. Familiar, "but don't go looking for it." Imagine Lower Manhattan, favor the modern Wall Streety offices with a touch of its Renaissance Revival fare and you have it. A city to make you believe in magic. Down an AVENUE...

A LIMO moves through the august, already-bustling capital.

INT. LIMOSINE. THAT MOMENT.

David sits in the front seat, by the DRIVER. Overwhelmed.

EXT. ALTAR MANSION. GATES. DAY.

The Royal home in the capital, in the Gracie Mansion vein. King's Guard SENTRIES cover the forecourt. A small GUARD HOUSE controls the only gate.

The two GUARDS wave a service truck through. These are BOYDEN and KLOTZ. They've worked together too long.

BOYDEN

Ice trucks. Means fish tonight.
Probably King Salmon given the season.

KLOTZ

Nu-uh. Doesn't mean fish.

BOYDEN

Then what?

KLOTZ

Lamb. It's a hero's welcome. Heroes get red meat. I'd do it with a nice pistachio crust if asked.

BOYDEN

No chance. Queen Rose hates lamb. Ever since she spent her summers on her uncle's sheep farm, everyone knows that.

KLOTZ

Do they? They know what color panties she picks for Thursdays too?

David's limo approaches. He isn't quite clear on protocol.

BOYDEN

Day Sirs. Names?

DAVID

Oh, right. David Shepherd. Here to see --

They instantly recognize his name, and light up accordingly.

KLOTZ

Oh, you're here to see everyone.

Klotz holds up a newspaper. ON THE COVER is an ICONIC PHOTO OF DAVID STANDING UP AGAINST THE GOLIATH TANK (taken by Savoy at the scene). Part Ruben's "David Slaying Goliath," part Tiananmen Square. David blanches. Clearly EMBARRASSED.

DAVID

That's in the paper?

KLOTZ

It's in all the papers.

BOYDEN

You'll have to settle a bet for us, Sir.
On what's being served for you tonight.

DAVID

(no clue)
Right... Tonight.

BOYDEN

Y'know... at your banquet!

David blinks. *Banquet?*

INT. GRAND BALLROOM. ALTAR MANSION. THAT MOMENT.

A HUGE affair in the making. An UNDERBUTLER stands on the GREAT TABLE, polishing it with cloth booties... A FENDERSMITH stokes a roaring fire... FOOTMEN lay plates down by ruler.

ROSE BENJAMIN (regal 50s) eyes the party preparations like a General. She might seem dotty, but don't be fooled. Nothing gets by Rose. She's handed a MENU by her HOT PERSONAL SECRETARY, (20s, too sexy to be trusted at her job).

ROSE

Ah, the menu. Squab, herb polenta, arrabiata for the vegetarians... good, good. Perfect, but take off the lamb.

She makes a face. She hates lamb after all.

ROSE (cont'd)

What about the guest of honor? Who's making sure he's presentable.

HOT SECRETARY

We have Jack on it, Ma'am.

But Rose knows her son better than that.

ROSE

Then put someone on Jack.

Off which -- CLUB MUSIC RISES, too loud...

INT. UNDERGROUND CLUB. THAT MOMENT.

Whirling lights, pounding rhythms, and drinks priced triple.

JACK BENJAMIN sits on a plush couch with FRIENDS and DRINKS, just a small bandage to show for his near-death experience. Jack was raised hearing "No" few times -- smart and a good soldier quite by accident. A far too SLICK GUY FRIEND has a girl on his lap. Jack has TWO.

GIRL ON HIS LAP

I can't believe you came out tonight. I mean, you almost died out there.

JACK

I didn't. That called for more living.

Jack kisses his girl, catching his friend's eye. Strangely public. He's interrupted when a WOMAN IN AN OVERCOAT comes:

THOMASINA, the Benjamins' sturdy FAMILY HANDLER. Thomasina knows everything about the royal family's most private lives and, even tortured, would say nothing. She has Jack's coat.

JACK (cont'd)

Thomasina, my love. Don't be jealous.

THOMASINA

(uncharmed)

Come. You're meeting Shepherd. He's coming to Court.

JACK

I thought that was tomorrow.

THOMASINA

It is tomorrow.

EXT. CLUB / BACK ALLEY. A MINUTE LATER.

Jack already has his sunglasses on as he's lead out the back door. REPORTERS and PAPARAZZI capture his exit. He handles it with the aplomb of a kid who grew up with this crap:

He pulls out a PAINT PELLET GUN and SHOTS them. Pegs a few on the lens. Good shot. As Thomasina pulls him on...

INT. GUEST ROOM. ALTAR MANSION. DAY.

David looks miniscule in the huge room. About as comfortable in such gilded extravagance as a kid in a wool sweater. A diamond in the rough chucked in with the crown jewels.

INT. HALLS. ALTAR MANSION. DAY.

David wanders the endless art-filled halls alone. Any one of those paintings could buy his mom's house. He's staring at a portrait of Silas when:

JACK (O.S.)

That used to hang in my room. Kept me up at night.

David sees Jack there, cradling a cup of coffee. He salutes. Jack takes saluting David in, none too impressed.

JACK (cont'd)

You saved my life, we can skip all that. Besides, you're the darling today.

DAVID

Sorry, Sir?

JACK

I know. I get taken hostage and almost killed, and it's you they're throwing a party for. The mysteries of the palace...

If Jack is resentful, David doesn't notice. His eye is caught on a GORGEOUS GRAND PIANO. Wow.

DAVID

I wish they wouldn't. I'm not even really sure why I'm here.

JACK

Technically so I could give you a tour. An hour ago. Sorry. You're here to get shown off. You'll take a pretty picture with my father and be sent back where you came from, thanks for serving your country. Is that what you're wearing tonight?

David eyes his military dress, suddenly self-conscious. Reluctantly, Jack decides to take pity.

JACK (cont'd)

I'll have something of mine sent over.

DAVID

You're a lot taller than me.

JACK

I'll send the tailor with it.

DAVID

There's a tailor here?

Jack just shakes his head at the poor rube.

JACK

My father likes suits.

Off which -- CUT TO:

AN ARC OF MEN AND WOMEN, ALL IN SUITS...

INT. BOARDROOM. UNITY HALL. DAY.

Where Silas passes rule and judgement. The SUITS face Silas. They may be a King's Council but they have the bearing of a Board of Directors. Court by way of GE.

For now we'll call the MINISTERS by their function: FINANCE, TRADE, EDUCATION, etc. (We recognize ENERGY as the one who opposed Silas in the Prologue.) His solicitous CHANCELLOR, HIRAM SCHOLAR, keeps things moving with robotic efficiency.

The only one not in a suit is GENERAL LINUS ABNER, who represents the MILITARY and sits at Silas's distinguished right. Protective of his King from his DNA up.

No one speaks until Silas does. Ever.

SILAS

Gath.

ABNER

Now's the time to make the push forward, take the valley.

ENERGY

You've been saying that for three years.

SILAS

Last presented. Perry.

Behind him, someone scribbles furiously: Silas's young COURT HISTORIAN, PERRY STRAUSSLER. He follows the King everywhere, keeping constant record of his activities. He checks:

PERRY

Sorry. June 10th, this year. Unapproved by you, Sir. "We don't attack. We respond. Instigation is Gath's game."

FINANCE

Which is why they're winning. This war's been a cancer on our economy. If your valley can get us out, I support it.

CHANCELLOR SCHOLAR

Polling shows public opinion in favor of aggressive measures since the kidnapping.

SILAS

Negatives.

INDUSTRY

Could draw an offensive --

ENERGY

World press would have a field day --

CHANCELLOR SCHOLAR

The Reverend won't like it.

SILAS

The Reverend doesn't like anything. Still thinks I owe him because he swore me in.

ABNER

They've blasted us from those hills for years. There's never been a better time to make them stop. They're demoralized. And our troops are chomping at the bit.

EDUCATION

They all want to take out a tank now.

Beat. Silas's eyes wanders. We may only just now notice that, in a far corner and not at the table, is a SILENT MAN (50s, prim). He and Silas meet eyes. Understanding.

SILAS

Good. Let them. Push back. Enough to let Gath know we're done taking punches. We're stuck in a war we can't get out of, and our soldiers can't even remember how it started. It's time to do something.
(to Chancellor, done)
Please say that clears our agenda.

CHANCELLOR SCHOLAR

There are petitions, Sir. We have four.

He motions to let in the PETITIONERS, a handful of citizens each with papers in hand and hope in their hearts. Silas recognizes among them a YOUNG WOMAN. Of the overly driven sort that somehow convinced herself she must take over the world or die, and so seems to have ignored the fact that she's simply lovely. He shakes his head, amused.

SILAS

Probably only have time for one.

CHANCELLOR SCHOLAR

Court calls Ms. Michelle Benjamin, petition JL-41 on health care.

The woman approaches the Board of Ministers, addressing Silas.

MICHELLE

Sir. You've heard proposals to advance public Health Care before, I know --

SILAS

Most from you.

ON THE GIANT SCREEN: A PHOTO of a heartbreakingly sweet BOY.

MICHELLE

Danny Tanner, six years old and needs a new heart. Given the current options patients like Danny are left to treatments older than his parents.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (cont'd)

He needs a new heart. As badly as we need reform. I've outlined a plan --

SILAS

(interrupting)

I recall my own daughter treated for childhood illness very well by the exact level of care offered to every one of our citizens but deemed lacking by you.

MICHELLE

Your daughter had advantages many don't. She had parents who watched over her day and night.

SILAS

As they do now when they tell her to move on from an obvious impasse. Sorry, puppy.

At which we realize he's talking about her. HIS DAUGHTER. Grown up and healthy and all business. And just failed at her petition. Silas turns to Abner:

SILAS (cont'd)

The push on Gath. Make it loud. This is our chance to end this damn war.

Abner nods. Silas looks back to Perry, ever-scribbling.

SILAS (cont'd)

Put down, "He governed well and patiently, then ran home to shower."

Laughter. Thinking they've adjourned, Energy stands. Only he's done so before Silas. This is not done. Silas's eyes lock on him. Holding. Testing. A silent challenge. Until Energy sits... back... down. Only then does Silas rise, and all only after him. As they follow him out...

INT. KING'S APARTMENTS. ALTAR MANSION. EVENING.

The King and Queen's personal rooms. Done with an eye towards the modern. Endless wardrobes. Silas, showered, struggles with his shirtsleeves, annoyed:

SILAS

I lose more time to cuff links than tax reforms. Why aren't you dressed?

Rose appears, frustrated, looking for something.

ROSE

My damn blackberry -- I had it on my trip yesterday, I saw it last with my socks. Your daughter is livid, by the way. She spent months on that tax thing.

SILAS

Health care. Why with your socks?

ROSE
So it wouldn't get banged up.

Silas holds his tongue, long since accepting the quirks of Rose's logic.

ROSE (cont'd)
My fault for trusting anything important with that new secretary. Why are pretty people always so bad with details?

SILAS
You have world leaders on speed dial. You don't find it, notify the Service -- *dammit!*

Silas WINCES -- his back is pinching him. He strains to rub the lower part demonstrably.

SILAS (cont'd)
King of all I survey and I can't get office chairs that don't make my back spasm.

ROSE
You're an old soldier, don't complain. Your pills are on the counter.

Silas pauses. He didn't want pills so much as some sympathy.

SILAS
I hate pills. I'd rather have wine.

ROSE
Where the hell could it be?
(hands him the pills)
Wine makes your eyes droop, and you have to look nice for the pictures.

On "pictures"... CUT TO: FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

INT. GRAND BALLROOM. ALTAR MANSION. NIGHT.

A black-tie BANQUET in full swing. Rose has outdone herself. Sleek, elegant, and -- as with all things here -- grand.

The FLASHES rain from the PRESS corner. Where David is being PHOTOGRAPHED mercilessly. He doesn't know any better than to answer honestly:

REPORTER
Is this really your first time in the capital?

DAVID
I missed the 8th grade class trip. Mono.

REPORTER 2

You have any family here tonight? Your Dad proud of you?

DAVID

My Dad died fighting in the Unification War.

REPORTER 3

What about your mother? Is she here?

DAVID

No. She didn't really approve of me joining the army.

REPORTER 2

Why's that?

DAVID

You might've heard about my father.

That shuts them up. Silas, impressed, comes up to be photographed with David. A well-staged photo op.

SILAS

For a soldier you handle the hounds well.

DAVID

They're nothing. You should meet my brother.

Silas pats David on the back, excusing him. David steps off, awkward, unsure where to be. Like most people who don't know what to do with themselves at a party, he goes for

THE BAR

DAVID (cont'd)

I'd like a large glass of something really expensive.

The CUTE FEMALE BARTENDER smiles, charmed by him. As intended. She hands David an ancient single malt.

DAVID (cont'd)

Thanks.

CUTE BARTENDER

Thank me later.

She slides a PHONE NUMBER beside the drink. A first taste of Celebrity. Unsure what to make of that, David looks back to see Silas address the expectant CROWD. They watch him the way America once watched Kennedy. They believe in him.

SILAS

We celebrate bravery tonight. Tonight, I feel as sure of our cause as I did the day we founded our great country.

(MORE)

SILAS (cont'd)

We had little more than hope and a bad idea, the two key ingredients for global change.

(pauses for laughter)

But I saw what would come. That territories once at war would become a single nation. Under one flag, united. Under one King, strong...

As Silas continues --

AT THE ENTRANCE

An imposing GENTLEMAN enters, 60s but timeless. The revered REVEREND HANSON SAMUELS. He'd be a prophet if you believed in such things. From across the room Samuels and Silas lock eyes. Some unresolved tension between them.

CHANCELLOR SCHOLAR

Reverend Samuels. It means so much to have you --

REVEREND SAMUELS

Let me get a drink in me before you start asking for things, would you, Hiram.

Scholar backs off, as Samuels beelines for the BAR.

ON SILAS

Drawing to a close expertly with a story he's told many times:

SILAS

And that was when they came... like a shadow overhead... I looked up and I saw...

(a look to the FLAG above)

A great swarm of butterflies. They circled around me like... leaves in a storm, floating, soft, coming down upon me. And landing as a crown upon my head. A living crown. God's signal to begin! I hope I've lived up to it.

His audience eats it up, letting him know he sure as hell has. Some men are just born bigger. A flurry of flashbulbs.

ON JACK

Watching this. Jack whispers to his mother, who we notice standing with the PRIM SILENT MAN from the Boardroom.

JACK

The butterflies? How long is he gonna keep telling that one?

ROSE

As long as they want to hear it. You will too someday.

AT THE BAR

David notices the great Reverend being handed the same drink he has, awestruck. But Samuels raises his glass... to him.

REVEREND SAMUELS

If it's good enough for the hero, it's more than enough for an old preacher.

DAVID

Sir. I don't know if I count as a --

REVEREND SAMUELS

Don't argue with me, Son, I'm too old to change my mind about anything important. Let me see your hands.

Odd request. But David's not about to argue. Samuels looks.

REVEREND SAMUELS (cont'd)

More than a mechanic. Fingers are itching... You had an eye for that piano.

David stops -- *How did he...?* Samuels just smiles.

REVEREND SAMUELS (cont'd)

Now what's this, a man hiding at the bar is a man who doesn't want to be at the party.

DAVID

I guess I'm more used to the front.

REVEREND SAMUELS

Look around. You've got a banquet in your name, a single malt the likes God himself only takes out of the cabinet once a year, and your choice of ladies very interested in your attention.

(sips, beat)

You'll like the one in red.

They look. Sure enough David is being checked out by the WOMEN OF THE ROOM (though none in red).

REVEREND SAMUELS (cont'd)

Your nights won't always be this easy. Enjoy it. Just... watch out for cameras.

Samuels leaves him. David takes a look at the WOMEN to be chatted up... then sees the PHOTOGRAPHERS lying in wait for him. Warned, he quickly veers, ducking out a DOOR.

INT. HALLWAY. ALTAR MANSION. CONTINUOUS.

David walks a cavernous hall alone. He wanders back to where he met Jack earlier, finally finding what he's looking for:

THE PIANO.

He runs his hand over it. Tests a key. It's tuned. Of course. He sits down in front of it.

You would never have imagined that a gangly mechanic/soldier could play a piano so sweetly, but that's what David does. The watery sounds of Liszt's "*Un Sospiro*" fill the halls... A wonderful, private moment, until --

VOICE (O.S.)

You're not supposed to be playing that.

David stops when he sees: MICHELLE. A knockout, despite her best efforts. Elegant, soft beauty. And in a subtle red. He resumes playing.

MICHELLE

That piano was a gift to my father from the Prime Minister of Austeria.

DAVID

This piano's a Broadwood grand. 1848, the same year Liszt wrote this. Closest I ever came to one was a picture on the internet. You can call security, but I'm finishing first.

MICHELLE

I thought you were a mechanic. Wouldn't have pegged you for a musician.

DAVID

Wouldn't have pegged you for a snitch.

MICHELLE

Well, they're looking for you.

He makes no signs of stopping. Michelle, fed up, leaves him to it. He continues, the etude carrying us back into...

INT. GRAND BALLROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Samuels is in conversation with a DIPLOMAT, when he senses a looming presence: Silas with his ever-present entourage (Perry, Abner, Walter, etc.). The Diplomat excuses himself.

SILAS

You know him? The kid.

REVEREND SAMUELS

Not sure I know anyone anymore.

Fuck if Silas knows what he's so pissed about.

SILAS

Speak in riddles, Reverend, you're liable never to get your point across. If you're against the offensive I don't want to hear it. I don't need your permission to defend my country.

MOVE WITH SILAS as he walks away. He sees David coming back into the hall, to be attacked again by photographers. A look from Silas and Thomasina shoos them away, ushering David to --

THE GREAT TABLE. Where David is invited to sit. Beside Silas. Silas waves off his retinue. A moment alone.

SILAS (cont'd)

Let's speak plainly, you and I.

DAVID

Yes, Sir.

SILAS

Plainly doesn't come with Sirs. Quit it. I owe you a lot, Son. More than I can say. You don't have children, do you?

DAVID

I'm an uncle.

Silas looks out... to Jack. His son. Laughing with FRIENDS.

SILAS

Then you don't know. You saved my son's life. That means I owe you mine. Just tell me what you want, and it's yours.

DAVID

Really, I'm fine. They already offered a reward that's way more than I can spend.

SILAS

You're a young man, smart, you have to have some goals. I'm a man with position offering you a thank you. "Even if you ask for half my Kingdom," as the saying goes... Speak up or you're liable to get a car you can't afford insurance on.

David considers the huge offer. Then looks across the room -- to lovely MICHELLE. Sitting alone. Silas understands.

SILAS (cont'd)

Ah, half my Kingdom it is.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE FLOOR. GRAND BALLROOM. A MOMENT LATER.

Michelle and David stand arm in arm, the only ones on the dance floor. A beat, then the ORCHESTRA BEGINS a Boccherini minuet. They hold still a moment, then Michelle realizes:

MICHELLE

You have no idea how to dance, do you?

DAVID

Not even a little bit. This really seemed like a good idea a minute ago.

MICHELLE

There are a lot of people watching you right now, you know that.

DAVID

Now, yes. Very clear.

MICHELLE

(taking pity)

Follow my lead.

David nods gratefully... They begin, Michelle leading. They move lightly and well in time to the music. Not bad.

MICHELLE (cont'd)

Sorry about before. I took my bad day out on you.

DAVID

Princessing is hard work, huh.

MICHELLE

(offended)

Health reform actually. I showed them a way to help people and got told it was inconvenient. I'm trying to get a six year-old a new heart.

David is taken aback, sort of stunned. He wasn't expecting anything like that. Not from her.

MICHELLE (cont'd)

What?

He has no answer. They dance. Like two people who fit well together only have yet to discover it. Something to look forward to.

ON SILAS

Aside alone with Abner. Watching Michelle dance. Beautiful.

SILAS

Happiness suits her. Who knew?

His eye wanders, landing on... ENERGY (the Minister who spoke against him in the Prologue). Arm around HIS DOWDY WIFE. Silas's eyes narrow.

SILAS (cont'd)

Him.

ABNER

Yes, Sir.

SILAS
I didn't forget what he said and when he
said it. He reveals himself.

ABNER
Yes, Sir.

SILAS
Don't make a show of it. Quickly.

ABNER
(understood)
The wife?

SILAS
(after a thought)
No need.

And that's all the attention he'll give it. Silas goes back
to watching David and Michelle dance. Romantic and graceful,
capturing every eye in the room. Something about that kid...

ABNER
He'll be trouble, you watch. I know the
type. Only way to deal with them is a
bullet. While I'm at it?

Silas shoots him a look -- *Don't be ridiculous.*

SILAS
Please. He's an infant. And he's got the
people eating out of his hand. Look, the
cameras are wearing themselves out, and no
one's asking about the war while doing it.
They need a new face in this Court to look
up to.

(an idea forming)
No. I think we can use him.

David continues dancing, no idea how much is in store for
him. As Silas watches them dance... it really is a sight...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO.EXT. FRONT GATES. ALTAR MANSION. BRIGHT EARLY MORNING.

Boyden and Klotz come in to their guardhouse, thermoses full for the crisp new day. Boyden notices something shiny waiting on the desk.

BOYDEN
Something here for us.

He looks, finds TWO TIN FOIL GEESE. Leftover style. A NOTE reads: "SEE FOR YOURSELF... ENJOY!" As Klotz digs in...

KLOTZ
Good kid, that David.

INT. KITCHEN. ALTAR MANSION. MORNING.

Silas is at the stove, working a griddle like a pro. He might be King but he's still a happy short order cook to his family. And he's in a big, grandiloquent mood. (TWO SERVICEMEN and an ASSISTANT are there but out of the way.)

Michelle comes in, sees a sumptuous breakfast spread. Silas hands her the same plate he has since she was four.

SILAS
Scrambled on toast, no butter on pain of death.

She kisses him a sleepy morning thank you, joins Rose who pours coffee. Jack enters, grabs a croissant, goes.

SILAS (cont'd)
We have a rare full house. Eat.

He hands Jack a plate, as Thomasina enters, to Rose:

THOMASINA
No sign of it, Ma'am.

ROSE
They checked the cars? And the luggage?

THOMASINA
The Service is asking for an account of the information on there.

Jack crosses to the fridge. No one sits still in this family.

JACK
It's the Queen's blackberry. You've got the birthdays and bad spelling of every person comprising society in the country.

MICHELLE
I think they're more concerned about national security.

ROSE

You know I don't like to get involved in politics. Come, let's keep looking before we bring in the National Guard. It's got to be around here somewhere --

Rose leaves with Thomasina. At that, DAVID ENTERS. Confused to see the King cooking and the royal family in pajamas and flitting informally around the kitchen.

DAVID

I was told to come?

SILAS

Ah, the brave soldier makes it. How do you take your eggs?

MICHELLE

(to Jack)

Did Mom lose her mind and then find Thomasina to take care of everything, or was it the other way? Sort of a chicken-egg question.

SILAS

Are we still using that expression? Given the overwhelming evidence in favor of evolutionary theory, let me make an official, royal declaration here: The answer, roundly, is egg. Not negating God, in whom I trust more than that damn Reverend'll ever know -- just recognizing that change occurs, thank said God, and that the egg would have to have been the natural improvement on whatever near-chicken mother hatched it and found her young delightfully different from herself. Evolution's just one of God's many tools. Like me. The only real and lingering question being --

(to David)

How do you take your first-come eggs?

David doesn't really know what to make of any of this.

DAVID

Is there... something you'd like me to do?

MICHELLE

He'd like you to sit and eat. My father insists on making breakfast -- makes him think his kids are still five.

SILAS

You were small and manageable and I preferred you that way. Shepherd, today you're with the family. Jack insisted.

Jack lowers his paper, surprised to learn that about himself. Silas sets a plate in front of David.

DAVID

I can't stay long. I have to report back to base this morning.

SILAS

No you don't. You're not going back to the front. I've got a job for you here. You're being transferred to Shiloh, as Military Liaison to the Press Corps. The press likes you, Captain Shepherd.
(off David's look)
Oh, right. You're an officer now.

How Silas intends to use him. It's a lot to take in for David. As well as for Jack. Who makes it clear:

JACK

Are you fucking kidding me?

Jack walks out. Silas ignores that, turns to shocked David.

SILAS

Bad time to lose your powers of speech, you're going live soon. There a problem?

DAVID

I'm not sure I can answer that without insulting my King.

SILAS

Your King hears insults with shocking regularity.

DAVID

I just don't think I'm... cut out for the city, Sir.

Silas turns to a LARGE SERVICEMAN, WALTER.

SILAS

Walter, if you hear this boy call me "Sir" again, I want you to take out your sidearm and shoot him. What's not to like about our city?

DAVID

Well... I'd probably have an apartment the size of my dog's shed at home. And no one talks about the war here... my brother and my company are fighting a few hundred miles away and it's like it's not really happening, except on TV. Plus, the city sort of smells like trash.

Michelle laughs. Silas pauses, faces him, entreating softly.

SILAS

I won't tell you what to do, Son, but you can do good here. Hope lies in bravery.

(MORE)

SILAS (cont'd)
 And we need hope. Give us a shot...
 It's just trash.

A beat. Then David, pressured by all this kindness, salutes. He can't say no. As Silas, pleased, steps out...

DAVID
 Yes, Sir.

INT. GARAGE. ALTAR MANSION. DAY.

A DOZEN CARS IN A ROW. The kind you wished you could at least rent for a day. FIVE SERVICEMEN comb through as many TOWNCARS. Rose watches with her flustered secretary.

ROSE
 I can't believe I've been in this many cars in three days.

HOT SECRETARY
 I'm so sorry, I don't know where it went.

ROSE
 A blackberry full of state secrets, let's hope not far... I'll go tear up my bedroom again.

She heads back in, where Jack joins her. MOVE WITH THEM, as:

JACK
 No luck?

ROSE
 It's your fault, I blame the grief. You really had me scared, Jack. You promised me you'd never die.

JACK
 I kept my promise, see? Look. How long are we going to have to suffer that one?

He means David.

ROSE
 He's harmless. He's a cocker spaniel.

JACK
 That cocker spaniel just took the best post in the military. Hell, I was the one taken hostage. That should have been my job. Instead... I'm being called in for questioning.

ROSE
More discipline? You know you don't do yourself any favors with your night life.

JACK

(stops, this is serious)
They're saying things about the kidnapping. That it was my fault my squad was ambushed. That I was impulsive, and went on patrol without a support team.

ROSE

Did you?

JACK

Of course not! I called in for overwatch soon as I got the order, those woods were crawling. We had support. At least when we went in -- then the shooting started and we were alone. Fine, my sister helps the poor, I like to party. But not when I'm in uniform. I earned my rank.

(then, meaning it)

I lost men. Men I cared for. We had support...

(and then)

Talk to him. Please. They could bring me up on charges.

It's a rare thing for Jack to let slip his actual feelings. Rose's heart breaks for him. Her eyes quicken. There's a reason Rose is Queen.

ROSE

You know I don't like to get involved with politics...

(then)

But, if I were to suggest something... I'd say let them.

JACK

Let them court martial me?

ROSE

Why not? Truth outed slowly is remembered longest. Sit through their meetings -- they'll see what's what soon enough. And then? They'll have to cover you in so many medals and apologies... you'll be stuffed from all the banquets in your high honor. Be patient, Jack. It'll all come out in the wash.

(beat, back to her old self)

Probably along with my damn blackberry.

She goes. Off Jack, that's not the help he wanted... PRELAP:

DAVID (PRELAP)

Mom? Can you hear me?

INT. BEHIND A CURTAIN. DAY.

TIGHT ON DAVID. He speaks quietly into a cell phone:

DAVID
Listen, Mom? I don't think I'm gonna get
back home this weekend like I thought.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JESSIE'S GARAGE. THAT MOMENT.

A SMALL MECHANIC'S SHOP. Family owned, and run by JESSIE SHEPHERD, David's formidable mom. Jessie is on the phone:

JESSIE
Why not? I thought you had leave coming.

Jessie WALKS with the phone into --

A LIVING ROOM (the home's attached to the front shop). Inside, a YOUNG WOMAN sets a large table. This is ELI'S WIFE, MOLLY. Jessie mouths -- "David."

MOLLY
(shouting into phone)
Eli looking out for you?

DAVID
He steals my cigarettes.

JESSIE
Good boy. Now what's this about not
coming home. Did you get in trouble?

DAVID
Sort of. Turn on the TV.

Jessie does. ON SCREEN: is a press conference. PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE unctuously chats to A POOL OF REPORTERS. Behind him a FLATSCREEN shows a PHOTO of the man Silas had Abner kill last night.

PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE (ON SCREEN)
...Suffered a coronary while jogging near
his home. Minister of Energy Fawkes was
a 15 year servant of our government and a
patriot. King Silas will be visiting
with his family after the funeral.
(beat)
We also have news from the front --

The reporters start to rise with questions --

PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE (cont'd)
You know we can't say too much. But here
to tell you what we can... we have our
new Military Liaison. You may know of
him already --

On the flatscreen comes that picture: David and the tank.

ON JESSIE -- confused as can be.

JESSIE

Hell, David? What's going on with you?

ON DAVID -- in the wings of the stage, on his phone.
Chancellor Scholar waves urgently -- *Let's go! This way!*

DAVID

I gotta go, Mom.

He hangs up, and follows out to...

INT. PRESS ROOM. CITY HALL. THAT MOMENT.

David takes to the podium. Looks out, sees lots of FACES looking up at him, DOZEN OF REPORTERS. This is the big time. He fidgets accordingly.

PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE

Let me introduce, Captain David Shepherd.

He cedes the podium to David. David looks at that tank photo that follows him everywhere, embarrassed.

DAVID

Anyone else really sick of that picture?
Can we turn that off? Thanks. Cool.

Someone somewhere swaps the picture out for the Gilboa's butterfly seal. Small LAUGHS. A REPORTER CALLS:

REPORTER

Does this mean no more action for you?
You'll be staying here in Shiloh?

DAVID

Look, I only had like ten minutes of briefing this morning, but I'm pretty sure they just want me to read what's on the prompter. So how about I just say yes and get to it, okay?

(beat, beginning)

An offensive was issued two hours ago by King Silas. At present, we have troops advancing across the Neutral Zone into Gath territory. We have reports that Gath has retreated its armor units --

This is huge news. The Reporters react.

REPORTER 2

Is this in response to the kidnappings?

DAVID

I think... it's in response to everyone wanting the damn war over already.

INT. SILAS'S OFFICE. UNITY HALL. THAT MOMENT.

Floor to ceiling windows. A Jerusalem stone desk. Silas and Abner watch the live press feed ON A SCREEN. David's "Aw shucks" charm lacks all the smarmy polish of the pros.

ABNER

This is embarrassing -- we can pull him --

But Silas is loving it. This is exactly what he wanted.

SILAS

No, wait. He's perfect. Watch --

They watch on as another REPORTER asks:

REPORTER 3 (ON SCREEN)

What about Jack Benjamin's involvement in the ambush on the 127th?

DAVID (ON SCREEN)

Far as I know Captain Benjamin's "involvement" was as a victim.

REPORTER 3 (ON SCREEN)

Is it true there's an early inquiry into his negligence?

DAVID (ON SCREEN)

I've no official information on that, but from personal knowledge I can state that that's a load of bullshit propagated by people trying to cash in on tragedy --

The broadcast managed to half-BLEEP the "bullshit." The press reacts to the language. They like it. So does Silas.

INT. JACK'S ROOM. ALTAR MANSION. THAT MOMENT.

Jack watches the briefing. The guy he can't stand is the only one defending him. He turns it off, and we CUT BACK TO:

INT. PRESS ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

In the back row of the conference, Michelle sits near the Silent Man from the Boardroom, WILLIAM CROSS. But with her he diffuses his mystery, and smiles to Michelle, amused at David.

DAVID

Men died in that ambush, c'mon, try to show some respect. Next question --

INT. BARRACKS. BASE CAMP. THAT MOMENT.

A closed-circuit TV playing back in David's barracks. Eli, Savoy, and the rest of DAVID'S BUDDIES are watching David on the screen. They go bat shit. Their David is on TV!

ELI

No way! They made him their monkey!

They love it. A PRIVATE taps Eli, interrupting his pride.

PRIVATE

Shepherd, there's a package here for you.

EXT. OUTSIDE BARRACKS. CONTINUOUS.

Eli follows him outside. SIX HUGE CRATES are stacked.

ELI

Where's mine?

The Private TAPS the six crates -- *All yours, Dude.* As Eli's eyes go wide... CUT BACK TO:

INT. PRESS ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

Forsythe has joined David at the podium to cut him off fast --

PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE

Okay, thank you, Captain. Little too much time around soldiers. Any last comments? No?

David surprises him by speaking up. Completely winging it.

DAVID

Actually, yeah, one last thing. I have a report that there's progress on a promising new health care petition to expand, y'know, coverage... which will benefit, um... I guess everyone.

David catches Michelle's eye. She taken by this obviously unauthorized shout out. William clocks her reaction.

PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE

Thanks for that update.

As he yanks David off the stage...

INT. HALL. OUTSIDE PRESS ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

The room clears. William catches up to Michelle, ON THE MOVE. As her uncle he has every right to taunt her like this:

WILLIAM

He mentioned your plan. Nice of him.

MICHELLE

I don't think he did it to be nice.

WILLIAM

No, I think that was flirting from a very interesting vantage. What the kids today call a "shout out."

Eyes narrow. Michelle doesn't like to be teased.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

I'm just saying... you may have promised yourself a life of service, days of policy and petition, that doesn't preclude nights of comfort. No one will think less of you for having a date while trying to save the world. Trust me, it gets harder as time goes on.

MICHELLE

And I wouldn't want to end up like you, would I, Uncle Will?

WILLIAM

Exactly. You know, you presented well yourself. As a policy maker not just as --

MICHELLE

Don't say "Princess" --

WILLIAM

"King's Daughter." I was proud of you.

MICHELLE

I crapped out.

WILLIAM

It was a good petition. He just blew it up because he doesn't know how to pay for it... Actually, I might be able to help there. Financing your health plan.

Michelle stops. This is a huge deal.

MICHELLE

Are you serious?

WILLIAM

The company likes its public face to have some dimples... and you picked an awfully cute poster child. I bet I could get the CrossGen board to make up the difference in funding. That is if you can stomach corporate sponsorship.

He might be a corporate raider, but he's still an uncle with a soft spot for his niece. As Michelle lights up, thrilled...

INT. BACKSTAGE. PRESS ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

David catches his breath on the sidelines, hiding, the facade of confidence gone. Thomasina comes to him, amused.

THOMASINA

Flying colors. How you feeling?

DAVID
Thought I was gonna vomit the whole time.

THOMASINA
Come, Sir. There's a call for you.

David pukes on a curtain. Well then.

THOMASINA (cont'd)
We can wait a minute.

INT. STATE ROOM. MINUTES LATER.

David is sat down in front of a MONITOR. A button is pressed and he's instantly video-conferenced with...

ON MONITOR: All his BUDDIES in his barracks, at the FRONT. CHEERING. Mid-party, holding up new PSPs, drinking BEER. Savoy spits some at the camera. Eli pushes to the front.

DAVID
You got my package.

ELI
(holds up DVDs)
Did you seriously spend your whole reward on beer and porn?

Yep. He kinda did. Eli cracks up at his brother.

ELI (cont'd)
You're crazy, you know that. Health care... You looked so nervous I thought you were gonna shit yourself. How you holding up, "Captain"?

David looks like he needs to unburden to his brother.

DAVID
I've been trying to get out ever since I got here.

ELI
Why? You're in the capital! Dancing with a friggin' princess. And no one's shooting at you.

DAVID
I just thought I should be out there. With you.

ELI
Are you kidding? You should be scooping it all up with both hands! You're living the dream -- and you deserve it.

David might not feel like he deserves it, still somehow having Eli's permission makes it better. But whatever he was about to say is interrupted by a sudden RUMBLE.

An AIR RAID SIREN BLARES. All the men snap to of a sudden --

 DAVID
What's going on? Eli?

INT. BARRACKS. BASE CAMP. THAT MOMENT.

The men scramble, ready. Eli instantly sobers, grabs his gun. A soldier again.

 ELI
Planes! It's a raid! Gotta go, Dave!

He disappears. VOICES O.S. SHOUT orders. Sirens WAIL.

 SERGEANT
They're right over our heads! Stations!
Move -- move!

FOLLOW WITH Eli out to...

EXT. BASE CAMP. CONTINUOUS.

They look up: THE SKY IS FILLED WITH ENEMY PLANES. Raging overhead. We're UNDER ATTACK.

INT. STATE ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

 DAVID
Eli!

Off David's fear...

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE.INT. BOARDROOM. UNITY HALL. DAY.

Silas's Council is assembled. Both Reverend Samuels and David have seats. Tensions, and paranoia, run high. Silas listens:

ABNER

...We're looking at preparation for full scale invasion. They're coming for us --

HEALTH

They haven't fired yet, it could be a retreat --

CHANCELLOR SCHOLAR

We were told to expect an official message from them any minute --

ABNER

Recalling all your planes over our airspace is a message. "We're going to push you into the sea."

The thought terrifies David. Samuels whispers to him calmly:

REVEREND SAMUELS

I know you worry, your brother's fine. You'll call him later.

As if he was reading David's mind. All wait for the King.

SILAS

Solutions.

ABNER

Only one. We have to attack first --

FINANCE

I will not second a full-scale invasion -- not before hearing what Gath has to say!

The MESSENGER comes in. He has a BANDAGE over his nose.

MESSENGER

Message from the Premier of Gath, Sir.

He hands a RED BOX with the official document to Silas. Who tears through the seal. He reads.

All go silent.

SILAS

Son of a bitch... It's a peace treaty. They're offering a truce.

Samuels looks to David -- See? Off David's utter shock at the amazing news -- PRELAP, **KNOCKKNOCKKNOCK!**

INT. DAVID'S STUDIO APARTMENT. DAY.

David, phone in hand, opens his new door, surprised to find:

MICHELLE. Holding an envelope. She looks around at the tiny, crappy studio. Pipes showing. Nearly empty. The only real decoration is a framed PHOTO of the DAVID AND ELI IN TUXES. From Eli's wedding.

MICHELLE

Your dog must live in a very small shed.

DAVID

Apparently it's what I can afford in the city. What are you doing here, Michelle?

MICHELLE

I... owed you a thank you, for the free publicity. Thought I'd leave a note.

DAVID

So you hoped I wouldn't be home?

She did. Busted.

MICHELLE

This treaty is half your doing. You really should be out celebrating.

David just looks at her. *Celebrating?* He has no idea.

MICHELLE (cont'd)

You haven't seen?

DAVID

I've been trying to call my brother.

MICHELLE

Turn on your TV.

(off his look)

You don't have a TV.

(nope)

What do you think all that noise is outside?

DAVID

I... just thought that was the city.

Good Lord. As she grabs him -- *Come with me, stupid...*

PRELAP A RAM'S HORN BLAST... It RISES, SOARING... blending finally into... RAUCOUS MUSIC! The sounds of jubilation!

EXT. SHILOH STREET. DAY.

An impromptu PARADE is on. One of many CELEBRATIONS all over the city, complete with BUTTERFLY-SHAPED CONFETTI dancing in the wind like real butterflies. Like Silas's story.

In the thick of it are David and Michelle. David can't believe it. This is the happiest day in years.

MICHELLE

In Gath, there were parades in the streets when they bombed my father's car and thought he was dead, here we have parades when there's peace... A peace treaty!

It's like a dream. A passing PHOTOGRAPHER recognizes David.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Dude! Tankboy!

He takes David's picture. Then sees Michelle with him. Recognizing her, he backs off, leaving them.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)

Sorry, Miss Benjamin.

David gives her a look -- *What gives?*

MICHELLE

They have an agreement about me.

DAVID

How do I get in on that action?

MICHELLE

You have to be sick half your life, and be told you're going to die every six months. Radiation, medication, doctor to doctor to doctor...

DAVID

I read about that. So they left you alone?

MICHELLE

I was made of glass, no one wanted to be the one to break me.

(then)

One day I got better. They told me I'd live... but I'd never... have a family of my own. Thank you radiation. I took that as a sign. I get a second chance...

DAVID

(understanding)

As long as you put on a suit and help others... Saved to save.

MICHELLE

Something like that.

DAVID

So you end up with no life -- and I get photographed all the time.

MICHELLE

Don't act like you're not loving the attention.

DAVID

I'm glad there's peace, believe me, but... I never wanted any of this.

MICHELLE

Then why'd you do it? Why steal out into the dark night "with just a brave heart and a wrench..."

She's hamming it up. David thinks, answers honestly.

DAVID

I don't know. I didn't really think about it. I just couldn't sleep.

Michelle considers that. They stop at the railing at the edge of the bay. She looks out at the perfect city view... Bridges. Skyline. Water. Everything!

MICHELLE

Still wish you could leave the city?

DAVID

I don't get what the big deal is, I've seen all this on a postcard. Now, if you've got something special to show me...

She has just the thing. She takes the bait, drags him off.

EXT. SHILOH STREET. NIGHT.

Michelle has brought David to an empty narrow street. Not particularly impressive. In fact, it's sort of dingy.

MICHELLE

Here --

She points. He looks. Nothing remarkable -- just an empty ice cream truck parked next to a trash bin.

DAVID

There's a pile of trash right there, you see that right? This is what makes you love it here?

Yep.

MICHELLE

Do you remember the inauguration of Shiloh, the day we moved the capital... The celebration?

DAVID

Of course. I watched it with my brother.

MICHELLE

We were on our way to it all, driving, and my father saw that truck. He stopped the whole cavalcade. He couldn't get over it -- an ice cream truck. Here. Where there was nothing before someone dreamt it, a swamp. He hugged me to hide he was crying. No one else saw. It's like it wasn't real to him until that moment. It was freezing out and he bought us all rocket pops.

(then)

That was when I first understood... the human will can take a swamp and turn it into ice cream. This city is progress. This is what we were fighting for, all this time.

DAVID

For ice cream.

MICHELLE

(beat)

Is there anything better?

David smiles. She's opened up. And it's a lovely sight. He picks a butterfly confetti from her hair. It brings him in close. He KISSES her. It's welcome. At least for a moment --

MICHELLE (cont'd)

Wait -- I'm sorry... I can't.

DAVID

Saved to save...

MICHELLE

Yes. I don't know. Not for... this.

David kisses her again anyway. It's a good one. One that makes promises for more. She doesn't fight it this time.

MICHELLE (cont'd)

Someone could see.

DAVID

Don't worry so much.

And maybe for the first time in her life, she doesn't. They go at it with abandon, right there against the ice cream truck. Two bodies meant for each other. So lost in the perfect moment...

They don't even notice that PHOTOGRAPHER across the street. Snapping pictures of the whole thing.

EXT. CITY OF SHILOH. NIGHT.

Midnight. And the city shows no signs of quieting.

INT. SILAS'S OFFICE. UNITY HALL. NIGHT.

Silas looks out his window at the sparkling city. He can hear the MUSIC from here. Behind him Perry scribbles.

SILAS

Read it back.

PERRY

"And it happened that Silas King forged an accord of peace with Gath. The dancing in the streets could be felt even up unto the King's rooms, shaking his pen as he signed his name."

SILAS

Nice turn, Perry. We made legend today.

Perry beams, leaves. William enters, unannounced.

SILAS (cont'd)

Ah, William, who comes to the King uncalled. Why aren't you on a parade float somewhere?

William joins him by the window. They look out together.

WILLIAM

No sign of it letting up either. Even Michelle's out having fun for once.

SILAS

It was a good gamble. We finally scared them into peace. We can build again.

Silas is thrilled. A beat. Then, what William came for:

WILLIAM

I was thinking. This truce... It might not be the best thing for the country right now.

The air goes thick. Silas's mood, and world, comes undone. He understands instantly what William is "asking."

SILAS

What? I just signed the treaty...

WILLIAM

Which makes it the perfect opportunity to invade. They'd never see it coming.

SILAS

But-- We only attacked to scare them into this, now you want me to refuse?

(silence from William)

Everything this country needs is wrapped in peace. You can hear the damn parade! The people want peace --

WILLIAM

They can have it. Say, in a year. Then you could end the war. CrossGen has too much invested in the military right now. Aviation... This war needs to continue, Silas. Gather your Generals.

William's voice has lost the uncle's affability. This is the cold voice of profit. Silas's heart breaks.

SILAS

This isn't some government contract, building a bridge! Men will die!

William just points outside to the ONE BUILDING that stands TALLER than Unity Hall. The CROSSGEN LOGO atop it.

WILLIAM

You see that building? Course you do, I made sure your chair faced it. You may have built this country but I paid for it! I handed you that crown.

He points at THE GOLD CROWN mounted high on the wall.

SILAS

I repaid that debt many times.

WILLIAM

You were a determined man, once. Don't forget all you sacrificed to get where you are right now. You even gave up that tart you loved -- made me your damn brother -- all so you could have my money at your back... You knew the cost.

Beat.

SILAS

And if I refuse?

WILLIAM

One call is all it takes to pull our gold from your treasury. Everything you built will collapse. By lunch those parades will be riots and your banks will be on fire. You'll have more deaths on your head than would ever come out of a war.

(then)

It's one more year, Silas. Then sign whatever you want. Find a way.

SILAS

How... could I live with myself?

WILLIAM

Same as you always have.

End of discussion. The door SLAMS. Silas is alone. His hands GRIP a chair tight. He HURLS the chair at the giant mounted CROWN. Something priceless destroyed.

INT. LOBBY. UNITY HALL. NIGHT.

Later still. Silas comes off the elevator, finds Thomasina.

SILAS
Thomasina. You never sleep either.

THOMASINA
The family needs 24 hour care. You all right, Sir?

SILAS
Quarterly reports are the death of innovation.
(then)
Ready a car.

She nods, understanding without needing to be told.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. NIGHT.

Silas's Towncar drives through the rain, without escort. It pulls up in front of a simple house.

INT. COUNTRYSIDE HOME. NIGHT.

Warm tones, warm light. A place you just know smells like cinnamon. A WOMAN answers the door, ALTHEA (mid-40s). She looks like she'd smell like cinnamon too. Beautiful. And very, very glad to see Silas.

SILAS
I woke you.

ALTHEA
I was up.

They kiss hello like a couple who've loved each other a long time. They have.

ALTHEA (cont'd)
Long night?

He nods. Neither says any more about it. They have an unspoken understanding. Several actually.

ALTHEA (cont'd)
Sit. I made soup.

SILAS
What kind?

ALTHEA
Kind you'll like.

He sits. She can see he sits a bit gingerly. She puts her arms around him from behind.

ALTHEA (cont'd)
Your back's bothering you again. I'll get you a pillow.

He doesn't even have to ask, a sharp contrast to how Rose treated him. Sympathy comes easily to Althea -- no wonder he could never give her up. Silas tries the soup. With it comes relief from the day's concerns. He holds her.

ALTHEA (cont'd)
Not too much, you'll be too full for what I need you for...

SILAS
Why do I ever leave. I'm happy when I'm here, and sad when I'm gone.

ALTHEA
Sadness can be useful too.

A kiss. Then, the sound of a CHILD CRYING, calling out.

YOUNG CHILD (O.S.)
Mommy?

Althea's about to get up, but Silas holds her back. *I'll go.* Another kiss and... FOLLOW SILAS into...

INT. BEDROOM. ALTHEA'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

A small SICKLY BOY is up in bed. Silas slips in next to him.

SILAS
Easy puppy, Daddy's here.

He comforts his son. Which comforts him in kind. Althea watches from the door.

Right here. This is how he lives with himself.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR.EXT. BASE CAMP. CRACK OF DAWN.

ARMORED TRUCKS pull out quickly, making room for the next to be loaded with SOLDIERS and supplies... COMMANDERS SHOUT orders to fast-moving TROOPS... HELICOPTERS CHUG overhead. The Gilboan Army girds for battle.

AT THE CAMP GATES

WAR CORRESPONDENTS deliver their worried reports LIVE.

CORRESPONDANT

...Yesterday we celebrated, today we hear shots fired again along the border. We're expecting a press briefing that should tell a waiting public if we are a nation at peace... or at war again...

The ECHO of distant ARTILLERY says it's the LATTER, as --

EXT. TRENCH. THE FRONT. THAT MOMENT.

David's SQUAD huddles down as SHOTS ARE FIRED. A SHELL EXPLODES NEARBY. Debris rains. ELI grabs a SAT PHONE, SHOUTS into it:

ELI

We're getting shelled here! Where's our air support?!

ABNER (PRELAP)

We don't have it --

INT. STRATEGY ROOM. UNITY HALL. DAY.

An UNDERGROUND SITUATION ROOM, full of LIT UP MAPS, LAND CHARTS, lambent displays that make war look clean. The Ministers take a back seat to Abner and his GENERALS. David is brought in as they continue to brief Silas:

ABNER

-- We'll have to commit to extreme measures to compensate. Take them head on, hit their capital. We... should prepare for heavy losses.

Beat. Silas hates what he hears. But is committed. He sees David's arrived. Hands him a brief.

SILAS

In two hours you call a conference and announce this.

(to Abner)

I'll talk to the Reverend, we need him on after.

David reads his brief. And blanches at what he sees. This is everything he fought against.

DAVID
We're invading?

ABNER
Intelligence shows Gath is stockpiling weapons. They were planning an invasion all along, the truce was just a cover to get our pants down.

David doesn't understand, turns to stone-faced Silas.

DAVID
But... you don't want this.

Said innocently enough that Silas listens. He's right.

DAVID (cont'd)
If you invade, there'll be no end. There has to be some way. You can rescue this.

SILAS
One tank and he thinks he can fashion history. There are a lot of smart generals in this room who know better.

All resume, assuming a King's word final. But David advances.

DAVID
They can't tell you how to move people. You can do that. Talk to Gath. Face to face. Call out to the Premier directly! You have to try --

Silas loses it, GRABBING DAVID by the throat and PINNING against the wall. Hard. All his frustration coming out.

SILAS
Do not presume to tell Us what to do. We are King and We do as seems right in mine eye. Say otherwise again and We will snap your neck right here.

Silas comes in close -- a WHISPER, just for David:

SILAS (cont'd)
And next time you fuck my daughter, don't do it on camera. You'd've had a much different picture on the front page this morning if it didn't come to me first.

His look holds. Then Silas steps back. Straightens his coat. Then resumes his work. David rubs his neck, takes his orders. Off a MAP of the pending battle... MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. COMBAT ZONE. THE FRONT. DAY.

AERIAL SHOT: The theater of operations seen from above (CG). The TWO HILLS FACING each other crawl with MILITARY ACTIVITY. If Silas is going to invade, they are going to resist.

ARMOR divisions take positions, backed by INFANTRY. This is war in the old way. Facing each other directly, expecting to clash in the middle and count the dead. It's gonna get bad.

A JET CAREENS right in front of us -- as we WIPE TO:

EXT. HELICOPTER PAD. ALTAR MANSION. DAY.

Silas and his retinue head for his waiting HELICOPTER.

ABNER

I'd feel better if you stayed back here.

SILAS

The minute I'm a King afraid of the front I'm not King at all. Where's my Reverend?

Thomasina gestures. And REVEREND SAMUELS is ushered up the strip. Silas meets him alone, cuts to it:

SILAS (cont'd)

You and I have had our differences, but we agree on the people. They're going to need you. Get on the air. Lead them in a national prayer, declare a fast, band them together. Like the old days.

Beat.

REVEREND SAMUELS

No. I won't do that.

SILAS

You're refusing your King.

REVEREND SAMUELS

You're not my King. Not anymore. Not after what you've done.

Another beat. Silas fears the worst. *What does he know?*

REVEREND SAMUELS (cont'd)

The kidnapping, those soldiers. The ambush that ended twelve lives. That was you. You recalled their air support, you allowed an assault on your own soldiers. Sacrificed your own. Your own son.

Of everything Silas thought he was going to say, he never expected that. A long moment passes as we wait for Silas to deny it. And then -- he doesn't. Admitting to his secret.

SILAS

Jack was never supposed to be near there --

REVEREND SAMUELS

They are all your children. And you sent them to die --

SILAS

I had to do something. We needed a strike but I couldn't get the people behind it... I only wanted a chance at peace...

REVEREND SAMUELS

And you didn't take that either.

Time stops. So he knows about that too. And then, a pronouncement, a voice like granite:

REVEREND SAMUELS (cont'd)

I bring a message: "*Since you have cast off the word of the Lord, He has cast you aside as King.*" He grants you no more favors. He protects what you love no longer. God wishes a man after His own heart -- while you have none. He will find another.

A slow burn. Then Silas rails. Not even afraid of God.

SILAS

That's what He says? Then to hell with God.

Samuels halts -- uttering the last lines of their last conversation in this life:

REVEREND SAMUELS

Just a man now, Silas. Try to live like one. For as long as you can.

And the Prophet turns his back on the King. Off Silas, all fear hidden from view...

EXT. BASE CAMP. DAY.

David comes off a transport. He takes in all the preparation for war: Bradleys moving out... SOLDIERS issued ARMOR... Javelins handed to INFANTRY. Everything he feared. Then:

He sees NATHAN coming off a TRUCK with others from his troop. Just off the front. A mess. BLOOD STREAKED on his uniform. David runs to him -- *What happened?*

NATHAN

We got shelled -- we took some hits.

DAVID

Where's Eli?

Nathan's eyes drop. Something bad's happened.

INT. MED TENT. DAY.

Many beds, soon to be filled. One already is. David sees
ELI

is BADLY WOUNDED. Blood seeps through bandages. DOCTORS do what they can. No... David goes to his brother. Eli plays it like everything's just fine. It's not.

ELI
There he is. How's the city?

DAVID
God, Eli...

ELI
There's a girl, huh? Always is with you. You fall hard and fast... Never shoulda taught you to play that piano... opens too many doors.
(and then, wincing)
Tell me how you knew... when the tanks were gonna shoot. Don't make me die without knowing.

DAVID
You're not gonna die.

Eli's look says he knows better. David can't fight the tears.

DAVID (cont'd)
Their... tank teams like to use the exhaust stacks to heat up field rations... they drop the entrees in when they're idling. You can hear 'em gun the engines to blow the packs out. They always do it before they shell...

ELI
(getting it)
So they can eat a hot meal in peace... while we've got our heads in the sand.

Eli LAUGHS at how simple -- the laugh turns into a wet COUGH.

ELI (cont'd)
It was bad out there.

DAVID
It's gonna get worse. I don't know what to do.

ELI
You'll figure something out. Always good at fixing things.

DAVID
There's nothing I can do. Everyone there
is... bigger than me.

ELI
Bigger than you? You're the kid in front
of the tank. You're a hero.

He's got a copy of the iconic picture from the paper right
beside him. A proud brother. David looks away, overcome.
Not by false modesty, but by shame. *That picture has
bothered David since the first time he saw it.*

DAVID
Don't say that. I'm not what you think I
am. I'm not a hero... That picture,
that whole thing is a lie --

ELI
But... you stood up to them.

David can't hold it in anymore. Not to his brother. Not
now. The secret he's been keeping this whole time.

DAVID
I didn't, Eli. When they took that
picture I wasn't standing up... I... was
surrounded...

As David breaks, FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. NEUTRAL ZONE. NIGHT. (FLASHBACK TO PROLOGUE)

*David's ROCKET JUST MISSED the Goliath. We see the tense
moments again -- only this time WE STAY WITH DAVID (remember,
we only saw the action before from the LOOKOUT'S POV) as:*

*He futilely throws the wrench-grenade that gets lost under
the tank. He RUNS. He TRIPS. He's caught dead to rights.*

*He stands. COMMANDS ARE BLASTED from the tank's SPEAKERS.
The LIGHTS frighten him shock still.*

*David reaches for his small sidearm... Then does the only
sensible thing. He DROPS his weapon.*

DAVID (V.O.)
They had me. So I surrendered.

His hands go out. MATCH CUT TO:

THAT SAME IMAGE, now in newsprint...

INT. MED TENT. RESUME.

We see it now, that picture of David in front of the tank was
actually A MOMENT OF SURRENDER. Seen from a distance and
confused for bravery.

DAVID

I dropped my gun. I was surrendering...
My grenade went off, threw the tread. I
got a lucky shot in. It wasn't even luck
-- it was stupid. Everyone thinks I was
brave.... but I'm not.

A long moment. Eli's breath quickens. David comes in close.

ELI

Then *be brave now*.

The words land. His breath stops. Eli dies.

The NURSES take over, motioning crushed David back as they
take his brother away. ZIPPING him up to be sent home.

David grabs hold of the blooded sheet Eli just died on. Holds
it close. His brother is dead. David wishes it was him.

EXT. PRESS STAGE. BASE CAMP. DAY.

A makeshift stage being set up. Forsythe sees David coming.

PRESS MINISTER FORSYTHE

Shepherd, you're late. You go on in --

But David blows right past him, past the podium...

INT. COMMAND TENT. DAY.

A mobile command center. VIEW-SCREENS show every feed
possible: HELICOPTER, UAVS, GROUND, LOOKOUT, PRESS, etc.,
providing comprehensive real-time video of the battlespace.

Silas wears a uniform well. More than Commander in Chief, a
Warrior king. The Generals present him with attack plans --
when the tent opens unexpectedly -- not on David, but on
JACK. Silas can see the fire in his eyes.

JACK

You're initiating a full-scale invasion.
I should be out there -- in command of my
company. You benched me --

SILAS

Then why aren't you on the bench?

JACK

If I'm going to be King, telling the
butterfly story, I need to be a war hero.
I can't do that from the sidelines.

Silas clears the tent with a look. All file out but Jack.

JACK (cont'd)

Is it because you believe what they're
saying? That ambush wasn't my fault --

SILAS
I know that --

JACK
Then what? I fought for you, I commanded -- I have the respect of everyone on this army except the one who owes it to me most. Is it because I have a reputation? "The party prince," is that it? None of that matters! That's not who I am --

Silas rears. Jack has pushed him -- and now is not the time for subtleties. Words he's held in for years come out cold:

SILAS
If only it was. What I would give for a playboy who couldn't keep it in his pants and runs through his women. Instead I have a son with no interest in them.

Jack blanches. Did Silas just...

SILAS (cont'd)
You thought I didn't know? I've been keeping pictures of our family out of the free press for years. What you do at night, with your boys... after your show of skirt chasing... It's a disgrace.

Jack is stunned. This is everything he thought he'd hidden.

SILAS (cont'd)
If you were my second son I wouldn't care. But for a King it's not possible.
(then)
We give up what we want when we want power -- believe me. You want to show me you have the heart to be King then show me you can control your own. Wrestle it into the ground, numb it with ice, or find a discrete room to fuck in when you have to, but you cannot be what God made you. Not if you mean to take my place.

Searing words. Jack is chastened, burning with shame. The tense moment is interrupted as a GENERAL enters, URGENT:

GENERAL
Sir! You'd better see this --

INT. COMMAND TENT. DAY.

EVERYONE IS GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE VIEW-SCREENS.

ON SCREENS: Are all the angles they need to see

DAVID MARCHING out of CAMP, past LOOKOUT... THROUGH cavalry. Headed for the border! INTERCUT BETWEEN THE SCREENS AND:

EXT. NEUTRAL ZONE. THAT MOMENT.

David steps through the barbed wire, not even noticing the cuts it gives him. He's COMPLETELY EXPOSED as he crosses the border and steps brazenly out INTO ENEMY LINES.

He has no gun. No armor. All he has with him is the BLOODED SHEET from his brother's deathbed. Not thinking, only acting from raw emotion. Past all fear.

INT. COMMAND TENT. THAT MOMENT.

All are stunned. *What the hell is he doing?*

EXT. GATH TERRITORY. THAT MOMENT.

David stands on a rock. A lone soldier between TWO ARMIES POISED TO ATTACK EACH OTHER.

He holds up the sheet, a blooded white flag. He SCREAMS ACROSS THE DISTANCE to the endless ENEMY, voice raw and broken -- but some part of him awakened by grief:

DAVID

You want blood? Come here and take it. It's fresh! Still warm from the life just left it. The blood of my brother. Know that you killed a giant today... Today you took from the world its best. These hills have seen the end of kindness.

(waving the sheet)

So take it -- take his blood... and tell me it's enough. If you need more, take mine! I surrender. Do it, shoot me -- and call that enough.

PAN ACROSS THE FACES of ALL who hear his elegy: SOLDIERS. GUNNERS. COMMANDERS. TANKS. The ENEMY across the way.

DAVID (cont'd)

Or... can one of you come down here now and show me your face... Show me you're more than metal -- tank and shell... Show me you're human, like we are, that you breathe and bleed and feel and feel pity. That you live for more than our deaths.

(then)

Come, any of you who have lost a brother... come and tell me it's enough!

INT. COMMAND TENT. THAT MOMENT.

Silas and his Generals are watching this.

ABNER

Lost his goddamn mind. Get a gun on him.

EXT. TRENCH. THAT MOMENT.

A GILBOAN SNIPER receives an order, readies. SNIPER POV: An X on David's head. All it takes is a word.

INT. COMMAND TENT. THAT MOMENT.

They watch David waving his flag. Abner looks to Silas.

EXT. TRENCH. THAT MOMENT.

SNIPER POV: UP ON THE GATH HILL. The tanks begin to MOVE.

SNIPER
Armor's on the move.

INT. COMMAND TENT. THAT MOMENT.

They see ON SCREEN: TWO TANKS CHANGING POSITIONS.

SILAS
Hold.

EXT. GATH TERRITORY. THAT MOMENT.

We fear the tanks are going to come down and roll over David... but they PART. Making way for --

A JEEP -- coming down the hill. Across the field of battle.
TO MEET DAVID.

The jeep stops in front of him. A MAN OF RANK steps out. Darkly-complected. An accent in our language:

GATH GENERAL
I am Ben Ahish, Commander of these armies.

DAVID
I'm David.

The General takes the sheet from David. Then takes a KNIFE from his belt. He CUTS across his own hand. He stains the cloth with his own blood. His with Eli's

He offers it back to David. Understanding in his eyes.

GATH GENERAL
No more blood.

David takes it. As they face each other, in grateful mutual surrender...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR.

ACT FIVEEXT. STEPS OF UNITY HALL. DAY.

Silas answers the REPORTERS, taking control of the situation:

SILAS

...Looked into our hearts and found a new opportunity for peaceful dialogue and truce. I personally sent Captain Shepherd, our bravest soldier, to extend the offer of mutual surrender to Gath.

REPORTER

Where's David Shepherd now?

SILAS

Captain Shepherd is suffering his own loss today. I hope you extend him the privacy he and his brother deserve.

He turns back inside. No more questions. As they dog after him, MUSIC RISES, "*Un Sospiro*" again, only played sadder now, mournful, carrying us to...

EXT. MILITARY CEMETERY. DAY.

Headstones aligned in rows that play tricks on the eye as you drive past.

AT A FRESH GRAVE

David comforts his mom as Eli is laid to rest. Eli's wife, Molly, stands with them. There's no reason to hold it together so they don't.

SHOTS ARE FIRED in salute. A SOLDIER hands the flag to Jessie. She refuses it, tough even in her grief.

JESSIE

I've given two men to this country. I've got nothing left for it.

David takes it for her. He stays by his mother as the MOURNERS leave.

JESSIE (cont'd)

Are you going back to that city?

DAVID

I don't know... Not sure it's up to me.

Jessie's disappointment reads clear.

JESSIE

They'll try to change you. Don't let them.

Jessie walks off. David looks to Eli's wife and child, still silently staring at Eli's grave. Saying goodbye to love.

David joins Molly. Not sure what to say. Then -- words come, awkward but right.

DAVID

So you know. Eli always took care of me,
it's my turn. I'm there for you.
Anything. Always.

The only comfort to her grief. As David takes her open hand,
a promise he intends to keep...

INT. LOBBY. UNITY HALL. DAY.

Silas and Abner, followed by Perry, cross the main lobby.
William marches at him, furious, joining them in --

INT. ELEVATOR. UNITY HALL. CONTINUOUS.

William doesn't care who hears it --

WILLIAM

"Opportunity for peaceful dialogue"?
What do you plan to do about this?

SILAS

I plan to host peace talks with the
Premier at the Vineyard. That stunt was
too grand a gesture. My hands are tied.

WILLIAM

You got what you wanted, didn't you...
That upstart did everything you wish you
could have done yourself.

SILAS

(disingenuous)

Me? I'd kill him myself if I could.

William is unconvinced and unappeased.

WILLIAM

I hope you're happy, Silas. You just
traded one war for another.

The elevator opens. William storms off. Silas doesn't look
too worried. He gives a firm look to Perry, who has, for
once, STOPPED scribbling. Stunned.

SILAS

"After which the King's brother in-law
came to congratulate him on the truce."

Perry nods, writes just that. History altered and written by
today's winner. He leaves Silas and Abner alone.

SILAS (cont'd)

Nice to be back in control of my own
country, Abner.

ABNER
 (half-kidding)
 What about the upstart? I'd still
 recommend the bullet. One last one.

SILAS
 No thank you, Abner. If I change my mind
 I'll send for you.

EXT. STREET. OUTSIDE UNITY HALL. CONTINUOUS.

William gets in his car, followed by an AIDE:

WILLIAM
 Call the treasury, pull the gold. We'll
 see how long the people cheer for him
 when they're starving. Then we'll handle
 Shepherd.

AIDE
 What about your niece?

WILLIAM
 Today she learns a lesson.

*As the fear spreads, did he just order the downfall of a
 nation?... Did he just order a hit on David?... CUT TO:*

INT. HALL. OUTSIDE DAVID'S STUDIO APARTMENT. DAY.

David, unsuspecting, walks up the stairs to his apartment.
 He doesn't see, around the corner --

TWO MEN IN ROYAL GUARD UNIFORMS, just LEAVING HIS APARTMENT.
 We fear for David's life as he turns the corner to face...

BOYDEN and KLOTZ (our Mansion gate guards). Huffing for
 breath and exhausted. David recognizes them.

DAVID
 Royal Guard?

BOYDEN
 Palace finest.

David sees the official NOTICE they left on the door.

DAVID
 Are you arresting me?

KLOTZ
 Ha! More like delivering an invitation.
 And a small housewarming gift. Took the
 liberty of installing it for ya'.

Confused, David enters...

INT. DAVID'S STUDIO APARTMENT. CONTINUOUS.

The GIANT PRICELESS BROADWOOD GRAND PIANO is in his tiny studio. Costing more than the whole building and taking up THE WHOLE APARTMENT. There it'll stay. A gift. *Enjoy!*

BOYDEN

Be seeing you I suppose, Sir.

As David reads the note...

EXT. CROSS VINEYARD ESTATE. DAY.

A vineyard in the countryside. Camp David by way of the Hamptons. A LIMO pulls up the LONG DRIVE.

ROSE (PRELAP)

We'll be receiving the peace negotiators from Gath here at the Vineyard...

INT. SITTING ROOM. VINEYARD ESTATE. DAY.

Rose leads a NEWS TEAM and REPORTER (now familiar from Court coverage) through the lavish room. Hot Secretary attends.

ROSE

It's my proud task to make them comfortable during these historic talks.

Thomasina and Walter come to Rose, interrupting.

THOMASINA

We've found it, Ma'am. Your blackberry.

ROSE

Lord bless! I lost it days ago, national security disaster. Where was it?

(off Thomasina's hesitation)

Just show me for goodness sake. I have no secrets from the press.

EXT. DRIVEWAY. COUNTRY ESTATE. DAY.

They're at the open back seat of a Range Rover.

THOMASINA

Jack's car, Ma'am. A maid found it in the backseat. It... was with this.

She produces the BLACKBERRY. Wrapped up in a LACY BRA. Rose immediately turns to Hot Secretary, gives the bra to her.

ROSE

Then you did have it. Unless this belongs to someone else?

Hot Secretary has no idea what to say. She goes crimson, runs off. The Reporter eats this up.

ROSE (cont'd)
 Ah, Jack... I lose more good secretaries
 that way.

REPORTER
 Is that off the record?

ROSE
 Oh... go ahead, I owe you one. Just
 promise to make him look rakish.

The Reporter writes the story down greedily. A nod to
 Thomasina and Rose smiles to herself, pleased with how her
 ploy went. All that, just to further her son's womanizing
 reputation. Rose is (and knows) far more than she seems.

WILLIAM (PRELAP)
 Silas's time is gone.

INT. CROSSGEN BOARDROOM. SHILOH. DAY.

CLOSE ON: WILLIAM, making an impassioned speech to the room.

WILLIAM
 Being King is a young man's game, and
 he's grown old. This is the time for
 bold action... And for action we need to
 know we have a replacement at the ready.
 What say you?

REVERSE TO REVEAL: The chairs are EMPTY. Only JACK sits
 there. Listening. And interested. He turns. From the
 windows here we look DOWN at Unity and City Halls.

EXT. VERANDA. VINEYARD ESTATE. DAY.

In the back of the estate. Silas has a desk overlooking the
 wide expanse. Manicured gardens leading into the vineyard
 itself. He is reading a document from a red box when he sees
 DAVID BROUGHT IN. Silas RISES TO HIM.

SILAS
 There are no words, Son. Your brother
 was by all accounts the kind of man this
 country is built on.

Beat. Wisely, David doesn't press it.

SILAS (cont'd)
 You're free to leave the city. I won't
 keep you. The piano's yours regardless.

DAVID
 They really need me back home...
 (after some thought)
 But I was thinking I might stay... It
 feels like the braver thing. It's what
 Eli would've done.

Silas is glad to hear that. They both see Michelle returning from the far off gardens. David brightens. The reason he came. The other reason he'll stay. Silas nods, *go ahead*.

EXT. GARDENS. VINEYARD ESTATE. CONTINUOUS.

Michelle and David rush to meet each other out in the garden. She is flushed lovely from the run, surrounded by hyacinth and muscat. He already feels better just seeing her.

He takes the comfort offered. It helps.

EXT. VERANDA. VINEYARD ESTATE. THAT MOMENT.

Rose joins Silas at his desk. They look out to the lush gardens... to Michelle sitting cozily with David. An affectionate relationship deepening.

ROSE

She likes him. You like him too.

She knows her husband. Despite himself he does.

SILAS

Happiness really does suit her.

ROSE

She was miserable before he came...

SILAS

Oh? Why?

ROSE

You didn't hear? Her boy with the bad heart... His transplant was supposed to come today, but the transport got shut down somehow. William said he can't even fund her petition, now that the boy's dead. It'd look terrible for the company.

SILAS

(beat)

I suppose it would.

Rose may not understand, but we do. That boy died in David's place. William's doing. Rose looks to her husband, smitten.

ROSE

Never you mind. The country is in great shape thanks to you. And so is our Jack.

She takes him in. Her partner. Her lifelong project.

ROSE (cont'd)

It's embarrassing. I'm still a bit in awe of you after all these years. All you've accomplished. Still accomplishing. I'll let you work.

Rose kisses him, goes back inside the house. Silas remains.

EXT. GARDEN. VINEYARD ESTATE. THAT MOMENT.

David and Michelle enjoy the quiet of the garden. And each other. From way off inside the house Rose waves to Michelle, calling her back in. Michelle reluctantly rises.

MICHELLE

Be right back.

She goes. Leaving David alone. Him and his useful sadness.

EXT. VERANDA. VINEYARD ESTATE. THAT MOMENT.

Silas, also alone, sees David out in the garden. So young and beautiful and sad. He looks like hope.

ON DAVID

alone amid the blossoming flowers. He notices something... A flutter.

A MONARCH BUTTERFLY

flittering around him. He puts out a hand. It lands on his finger. Adorable.

Then a SHADOW passes over David. Motion overhead. David looks up to see...

A SWARM OF BUTTERFLIES...

Flying above him. Now coming down.

They circle around him like... leaves in a storm, floating, soft... a whirl of color and Grace, spinning, coming down upon him... then alighting on his head as a crown. A living crown. An anointment. Just like in the story.

And Silas is there to see it.

Silas's smile fades. Turns to stone. He calls to a GUARD.

SILAS

Get me Abner.

(then)

Tell him I've changed my mind.

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT.